

Periodical

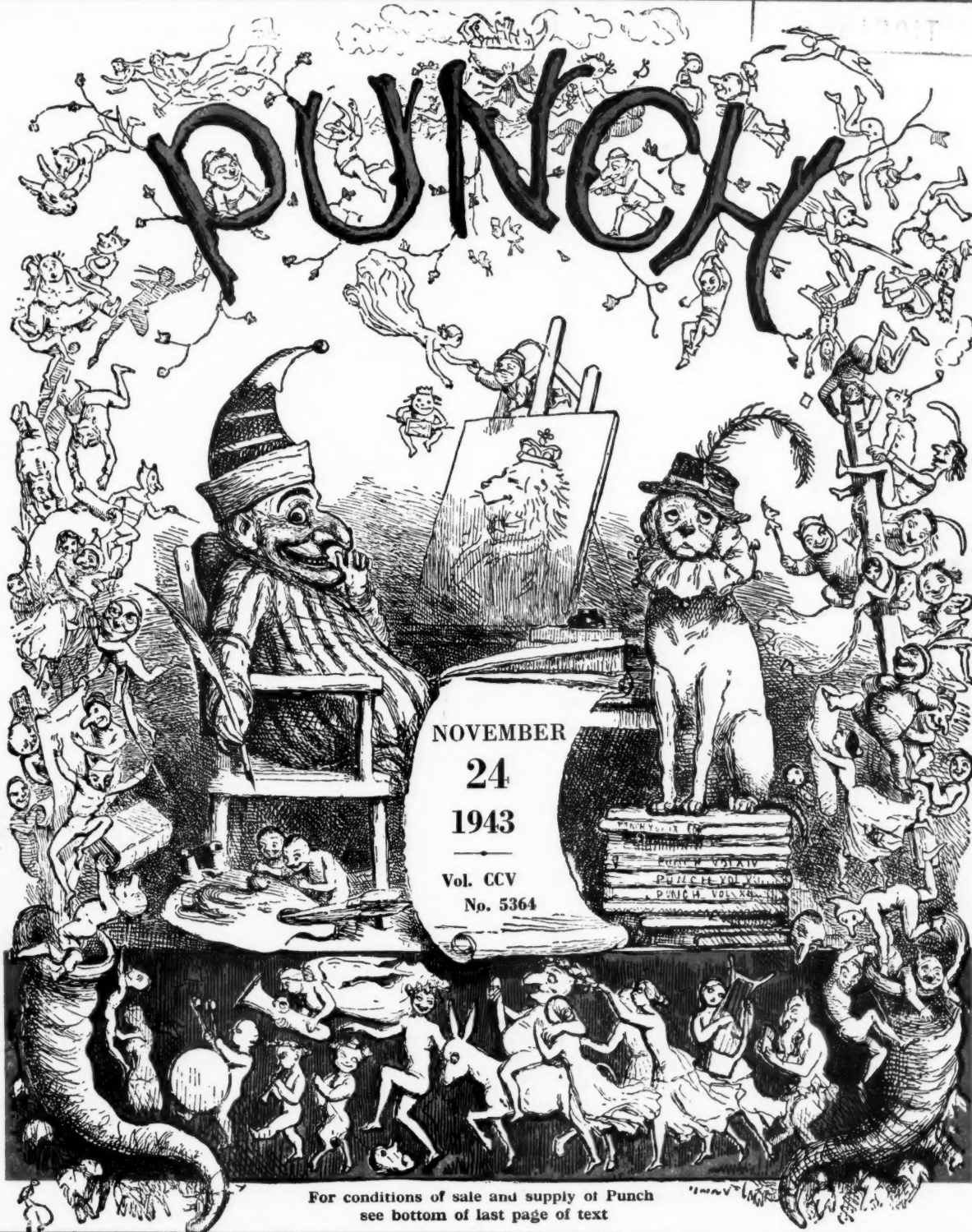
ALL CLASSES OF INSURANCE TRANSACTED

MOTOR UNION INSURANCE COMPANY LTD.

10 ST. JAMES'S STREET, LONDON, S.W.1



DEC 1 1943



For conditions of sale and supply of Punch
see bottom of last page of text

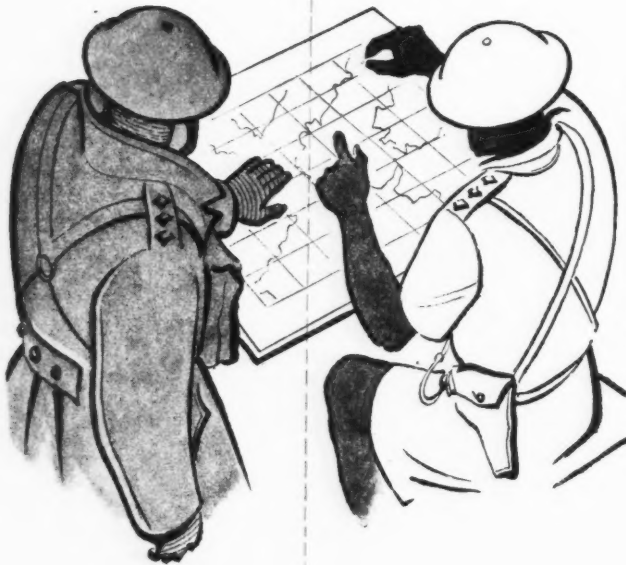


Imperial Typewriters

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—same shirt



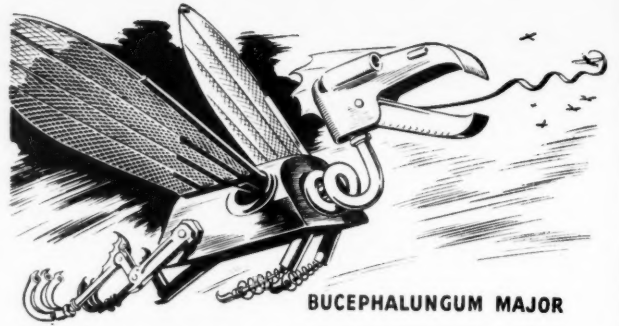
An officer off to goodness knows where, wants shirts that are at home anywhere on the map, that are nicely adaptable to all changes of climate. He wants shirts that can rough it when he has to, that are not afraid of the wash, and keep their regulation cut and colour. He wants, in fact, 'Viyella' Service Shirts. For H.M. Forces only. In correct Service colours—white, khaki and Air Force blue.



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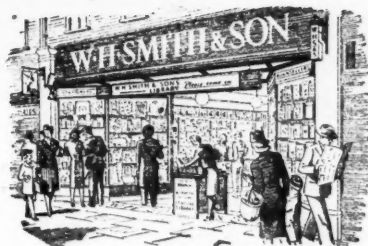
Sharp's
THE WORD
FOR Toffee

Personal points pages in new Ration Books are for confectionery and may be detached.

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for over 70 years*



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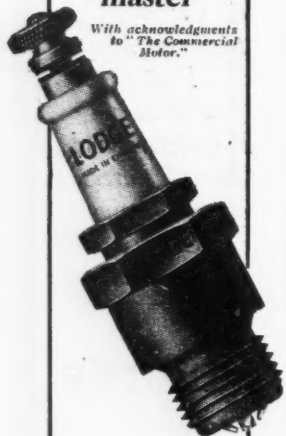


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Produced by
VERMOUTIERS (London) LTD.
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LODGE
PLUG
has a
worshipful
master



With acknowledgments
to "The Commercial
Motor."

Lodge Plugs Ltd., Rugby

PROGRESS IN PLASTICS

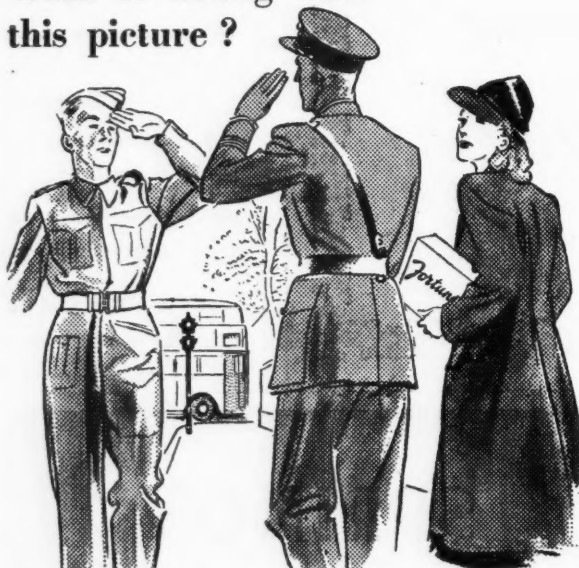
At the present time Plastics are playing a greater part in the war production than most people imagine. Immense strides have been made, and peace-time will see it applied for uses far beyond the dreams of its earliest pioneers.

If you are planning for the future let us discuss with you now how it can be applied to your business.

SOUPLEX

SOUPLEX LTD., MORECAMBE, LANCs

What is wrong with this picture?



Might almost be better to ask—what's right? Anyway, of all the mistakes here one couldn't be missed. It's that box of chocolates. Caley FORTUNE chocolates? Quite impossible of course now, Caley's have stopped making them—until after the war. But you can still enjoy Caley—though for the present only as Norwich Chocolate Blocks.

Enough errors here to start a court-martial! R.A.F. officer with a "Sam Browne"—reversed too, the saluting is left-handed and the private's Service cap is on the wrong side. Also an indicator's missing on the traffic lights.

CALEY

For Beauty and Good Taste
Spode
A great Name in good China

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What do I do...?

When brooms and brushes are wet I hang them up to dry, bristles downwards. When they are dry I put them away, bristles uppermost. I rinse out my shaving brush thoroughly in cold water to remove all soap, and then dry it.

I keep paint-brushes in good shape by cleaning them immediately after use.

Issued by the Ministry of Information

Space presented to the Nation by
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**BOTTLED
VINEGAR**
is best
for
pickling!



and this is the
**BEST BOTTLED
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The one ton capacity "Electric" is proving ideal for inter-works deliveries. Have you thought about it? "Electrics" use home produced fuel, are cheap to run and maintain, and are easily operated by women or young workers.

Use ELECTRIC VEHICLES

Details from the Secretary,
The Electric Vehicle Association of Gt. Britain
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'Celanese' products

Production for civilian needs has been restricted and we all accept difficulties as part of the background of war. Therefore you will understand Government regulations and problems of raw materials, transport and labour, mean that sometimes you will be unable to buy the 'Celanese' you need.

Will you take this inconvenience in your stride, knowing that as a result of research in connection with war demands we shall — after the war — be able to release to you wonderful new textiles, finer than anything yet known . . . unbelievably strong and amazingly beautiful.

G214



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Nescafé makes a grand drink in the most primitive conditions. No grounds; no mess; no coffee-pot. Just a spoonful in the cup, hot water, and there you are! Unfortunately, supplies won't stretch to cover overwhelming demand. But you may be lucky at the grocer's one day.

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Never again need you be bothered with the old unattractive placket with its row of buttons or other fastenings to spoil the symmetry of the hip line and allow your underwear to peep through. The 'ZWOW' Pocket replaces the placket on all the latest style Gor-ray Skirts. Walk and move around as you will, it cannot gape to show an inch of underwear. Sufficiently large to carry your handkerchief, a lipstick, and maybe a lighter and a packet of cigarettes, it is the smartest, most convenient fashion idea in years. All good fashion houses stock Gor-ray Skirts.

All the better for the ZWOW Pocket

Issued by: C. STILLITZ, Royal Lancington Spa
Scientific



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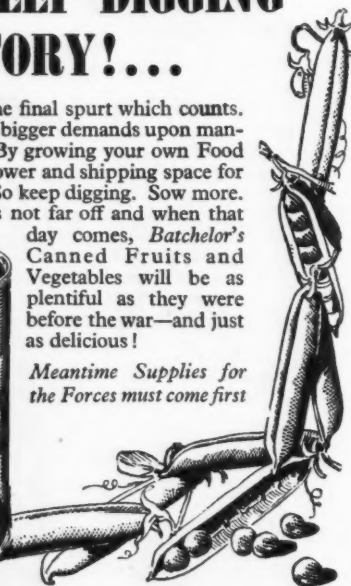
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We must KEEP DIGGING FOR VICTORY!...

As in every race, it is the final spurt which counts. That means bigger and bigger demands upon manpower and shipping. By growing your own Food you help to save manpower and shipping space for vital work elsewhere. So keep digging. Sow more. Grow more. Victory is not far off and when that day comes, *Batchelor's* Canned Fruits and Vegetables will be as plentiful as they were before the war—and just as delicious!

Meantime Supplies for the Forces must come first



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ENGLISH CANNED
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**but when it comes to shaving—
this is the course I steer!**

- ✓ Full speed ahead—no brush and water to slow things up.
- ✓ Convenience—none of this brush and water business; that's a big advantage, especially in cold weather.
- ✓ Comfort—Sport soothes the skin! So, after shaving, rub in what's left to protect the face against exposure to the weather.
- ✓ So, you see, shaving is all plain sailing if you never trust your chin to anything but—

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BRUSHLESS SHAVING CREAM
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IN TUBES AND JARS

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PUNCH

OR

THE LONDON CHARIVARI



Vol. CCV No. 5364

November 24 1943

Charivaria

A RETAILER assures us that toys this Christmas will be worth their weight in gold, but most shopkeepers are hoping to do a great deal better than that.

o o

A writer in the *Daily Telegraph* points out that German radio listeners never know when their enjoyment may be rudely interfered with. Still, they must admit that he doesn't broadcast nearly as much as he used to.

o o



It is said that many women use even less than the 850 words of Basic English, but of course there is a terrific turnover.

o o

Poles have excellent eyesight. They amaze British Army doctors by not only reading the smallest letters on the sight-testing cards but actually pronouncing the words.

o o

"C — CAFE

Afternoon Teas. Spend your evenings here."

Advertisement in Essex paper.

Ultimately the waitress will arrive.

o o

Present-day beer is so weak that many drinkers leave half a glass unconsumed, we are told. To Lady Astor this seems proof positive that our national beverage is twice as strong as it should be.

An M.P. confesses that he found making his first radio speech an infinitely boring process. He was of course in the unenviable position of being the only one of his listeners who couldn't switch him off.

o o

Nazi commanders on the Russian front are seriously thinking of sending back spies to Hitler's headquarters in order to find out what new weapons they are using.

o o

"Jeanne has lost her purple language book."—*Letter to school-mistress from mother.*

And a good thing too.

o o

"When first I joined a famous Hunt I was always last in the field," says a writer in his *Reminiscences*, "but I spurred myself to greater efforts." This must have been painful progress after he had been unhorsed.

o o



It was announced in the House that taxi-sharing facilities may be extended. The first step is to induce a taxi-driver to share his vehicle with a passenger.

o o

Owing to fog a rugby fixture between an Army XV and an A.R.P. team was abandoned and a shove ha'penny tournament organized instead. Spectators said it was a thrill to see the husky packs getting their heads down for the first shove.



Après la Guerre

I SEEM to see a vision of a terrible collision
When earth is all at peace again, between the
armoured vans
Of philosophic schemers and visionary dreamers
Assailing one another with their rolled-up plans,

When all the pro's and anti's of every young Atlantis
With fountain-pens and pamphlets and T-squares and
the rest
Girt up by Armageddon
Go out to battle head on
In a fury to be builders of the Islands of the Blest.

"Now here you have the pattern of the Golden Age of
Saturn!"
Beatitudes unnumbered in reeling squadrons jam.
"Each man shall love his neighbour!"
"The lion after labour"
Shall feed at British Restaurants on dehydrated lamb."

"Who is the Lord Director?" "Who is the Chief
Inspector?"
"Now kindly take no notice of that other party, please."
Oh, yes! there will be grapples
To get the golden apples
Out of the lovely garden of the good Hesperides.

Implacable authorities shall wrestle for priorities
To found a New Republic more splendid than the dawn,
And purple-faced or priestly shall call each other beastly
And struggle for Avilion with blueprints drawn.

For rules and regulations shall ransack all the nations
And the ploughman and the cowman be bundled back
to school,
And the criers of Utopias
Shall break their cornucopias
On the passionate resistance of the poor plain fool.

And I only hope the soldier will not say that it is mouldier
Than all the mud and blood and sweat and tumult of
the war
To have to face the fury
Of the philanthropic jury
Which is fighting to discover what he was fighting for.
EVOE.

Music

THE gramophone, I was saying a little time ago, is
a musical instrument. So is a piano. So is a violin.
So is a 'cello. I could go on like this for ages, but
all I wanted was to give my readers some idea of the scope
of music and the different ways it can be brought about.
But first I want to discuss music in its widest sense.

Music in its widest sense consists of notes. Notes may
be defined as blobs on stalks; the blobs may be either solid
or hollow and the stalks may go either up or down. Further-
more notes can be arranged in bunches, like cherries, or
singly, also like cherries. In all cases notes occur on or
between lines, and these lines come in two lots of five, but
at a pinch small extra lines are called in above or below
them for such notes as would not fit in otherwise. I am
afraid I have had to be a bit technical, but music is

technical on paper; so much so that there is quite a sharp
division between those to whom music on paper means
almost nothing and those to whom it means hardly
anything.

Music not on paper, that is, music happening, may be
divided into three classes: music, light music and dance
music. Those who appreciate music do not appreciate
light music but do appreciate dance music, if rather over-
consciously. Those who appreciate light music appreciate
dance music too, if rather under-consciously, because they
were not at first sure they should say so; they do not
appreciate music, of course, even if they say they do.
Light music, I should point out, is any music which goes
with the clatter you also get in a big restaurant. This
clatter can always be summoned up mentally as a test,
and a pretty severe test too, disqualifying anything but
the toughest music, so that statisticians tell us that more
people than you would think get by as militant music-
appreciators simply by their ability to fit a mental clatter
on to more kinds of music than ordinary people. I think
this is all I have to say about music in its widest sense,
and now I shall go on to some of the better known musical
instruments.

The best known musical instruments are the gramophone
and the piano. The piano is static, and the gramophone
nearly so, which means that those who perform on them
may be the pawns of circumstance. But no one who plays
a violin is a pawn of circumstance. Playing a violin is
a deliberate process, thought up beforehand and as likely
as not to happen again. People who play violins have
violins of their own to play, and little black cases, exactly
the shape of a violin, to carry them about in so that the
public can tell that anyone carrying a violin is carrying one.
All this goes, of course, for a 'cello too, and for a double
bass, but not for a viola, because anyone carrying a viola
in a little black case runs the risk of being mistaken for
someone carrying a violin; the public being hazy about the
difference between the two instruments, but willing to
accept the fact that there is one.

A violin consists of a wooden structure, also exactly the
shape of a violin, and about four strings which are tightened
with keys at the top to make them higher, lower, or snap
suddenly. The public knows that it is not easy to get
each string to exactly the proper tightness and has learnt
not to feel superior or even equal to a violinist who takes
a bit of time getting them right. All this goes, too, for a
'cello, but not quite, perhaps, for a double bass, because
the public is slow to believe that messing about with the
keys on a double bass will be justified by the notes the
public will eventually get from it—as far as the public can
make out, usually two, each lower than the other. The
public does not so much hear the notes of a double bass as
see them, a double bass only coming into its own when an
orchestra is so hot up as to be beyond control. Some
psychologists, by the way, are puzzled by the fact that
anyone playing the cymbals in an orchestra tends to be
mentally adopted by the audience as a fellow-human—the
audience taking to itself the credit for hitting the cymbals
together at the right place in the music—but that no
audience has ever thought of anyone playing the double
bass as a fellow-human. Other psychologists are not
puzzled at all. Still, it is rather interesting.

I must say something about the violin, 'cello, double
bass and similar instruments when they are being practised
on. Violins and similar instruments are practised on as
well as played, though not so many people hear them being
practised on. Or rather, fewer people will hear a violin being
practised on, but they will hear it more times. Anyone
who lives near a violin will pass through quite a succession



VISION OF RECONSTRUCTION

"Now, you four, just pay attention to this."

[The unnatural attitude of Landseer's Lions in Trafalgar Square has provoked a long correspondence in *The Times*.]



"I should 'ave gone easy with the 'eat at first."

of reactions, but the most interesting, psychologically speaking, is the illusion that the person listening to the violin is the same person as the person practising on it; in fact that the violinist, or even the double bass player, is a fellow-human. Psychologists, without meaning to be cynical, call this a compensating device; so do the people listening, but not without meaning to be cynical, because no one has ever lived near a musical instrument without setting up a defensive wall of cynicism to stop their friends pitying them too much. No one knows, by the way, what sort of defensive wall of what is set up by the people who actually practise on long-range musical instruments, because it is not the sort of question anyone would ask anyone, but it is probably a fierce belief in the inevitability of the artist.

Some musical instruments are professional and some are amateur, or rather, the people who play them are, even if they are not, if my readers see what I mean. What I mean is that anyone who plays an oboe or a flute is not normal, but anyone who plays a mouth-organ is as normal as may be; which makes even a professional mouth-organist nothing more than an overpersistent amateur. The mouth-organ is an interesting instrument because it is *too easy to play*. The first stage in mouth-organ playing is to play all the notes at once, and the last stage is to play one at a time. This makes the mouth-organ the direct

opposite of the piano. Also it can be carried without anyone noticing, which makes it even more the direct opposite of the piano. A person who always carries a mouth-organ, however, very soon gets known as a person who always carries a mouth-organ, so it comes to much the same thing.

Music, scientists tell us, is inherent in human nature. If human nature can extract music from anything, then it will extract it. Scientists admit that they only say this because they had to think up the origin of the musical saw. The musical saw is a very well-known instrument by repute, but not many people have heard one, which makes it exciting when they do; they classify it with seeing a dog carrying a shopping-basket, both experiences giving them the sensation that they are spectators—of the best, or whimsical, kind—of the inexplicable panorama of life.

Hitler's Utopia

O WOULD the world were one wide crater,
With Germans living round the rim,
And in the ruins one dictator
And all survivors heiling him. ANON.

The Impostor

I PICKED up a handful of the big coloured wooden letters and let them drop on the table in front of him; I always fell back on the letters when everything else failed. Early that morning Pte. Smith, who couldn't manage even his signature yet with tracing paper, had unexpectedly produced PLATFORM and had thereafter continued to produce PLATFORM every ten minutes or so, varying the colours a little and accompanying each new achievement with the same grunt of delight. I told him that he had done very well for one day and that he mustn't be selfish. "Now, Corporal, see what you can do with these—perhaps it will come more easily now." "It" was DOLLY, his wife's name.

"I will give you a hint: Brown—green—blue—blue—yellow."

Next time I got round to him he had produced NELLY, and looked at me with his eager, rather intelligent, inquiring eyes.

"No, that's not your wife yet, Corporal Joy—not *quite* your wife—that's another woman; she wouldn't like that, would she?"

"Oh, no, Sarge! and her comin' to-day, too!"

"Well, that will be very nice for you. I bet she'll be surprised, too, when you tell her what you are doing this month—that you'll soon be able to write to her, to send her letters."

Something like a look of horror spread over Corporal Joy's thin, eager, Cockney face.

"Oo, I couldn't do that, Sarge! that would give the whole game away, wouldn't it, Sarge?"

"I don't quite follow, Corporal; I don't see what you mean."

"Well, it would, wouldn't it, Sarge? She's eddicated, see? She used to teach in a Sunday school, see?"

I was just beginning to see, but I wanted to make sure. "You've been married ten years, I think you said?"

"Yes, that's right, Sarge."

"And you mean to say she doesn't know . . . ?"

"Oh, it sounds funny when you look back on it now, but it's been a terrible dance really," he said with conviction.

"It was bad enough in peace-time, when I was living at home. I 'ad to be on my toes right from breakfast on. We 'ad the paper every day—the wife used to put it up against my cup when she laid the table. 'Well, Tom, she'd

say, 'what's the news this morning?' and there was the blinkin' thing in front of me, with big letters across the top. 'Oh, nothin' much new, Dolly, take a look yourself,' or I'd look at the bloomin' thing for about five minutes, turnin' over the pages, makin' sure it was the right way up—I could tell that from the picktchers, see?—and then I'd say: 'Much the same as yesterday, dear,' or 'God knows what they puts in 'em these days,' which was true enough—and this, every day, year in, year out—but that was easy. It was worse when we got letters—she knew the writing, see. 'What does Ted have to say?' she'd ask, and I'd look at the letter and say: 'He's in a mess again'—well, he always was, see? and he wouldn't write if he wasn't. 'Take a dekho at it yerself, dear,' I'd say. But it was worst when she said what about writin' to Maggie for 'er birthday, or for Christmas, or some-think—'O.K., dear, I'll send her a line,' and I'd get out the paper very slow, see? and a pen and a bottle of ink: then I'd look at the paper a bit, see? and then I'd feel in my pockets and say: 'Dolly, d'ye mind goin' to the shop to get me some fags?'—or matches maybe—I'll get on with Maggie's letter,' and she'd go down and as soon as I heard the door up I got and was out with the paper and pen and across the road in a flash to my Uncle Ned's—he *knew*, see?—and he'd write me out the letter very quick, and me back again in no time. I generally got there first but sometimes she'd be there waitin' and I'd say: 'Just bin to see Uncle Ned about Ted's trouble'—or somethink—and then I'd say, very sweet: 'Like to put anythin' in to Maggie, dear?' but she never did. It was Dolly made me wear these specs, see? 'Cos I couldn't see the signposts and street names properly when we were out walkin', see? And in the Tube it was somethin' orful. Still, I stuck it for seven years. Oh, it seems queer when you look back, but I found it no joke then.

"Well, then the war came and I got into an Infantry mob. Dolly made me promise to write to 'er once a week and I was in a jam all right. Well, I had a chum who wrote for me every Saturday, see? And when 'e went on leave, 'e left me one or two letters already wrote out and with the dates put in. That was O.K. for a year—it was quite a rest, not havin' to think about it all day, and then I got moved to this mob. 'That's done it,' I said—

'cos my chum 'e stayed in the old mob, see? I *was* in a state, I can tell you. I found another chum to write, but the writin' was different, see? So I said: 'Bert, you write it in pencil, they say people writes different in pencil and praps the wife will think that's why it's changed.' After three letters I gets a letter from the wife. 'I see you've lost your fountain-pen,' she says, 'I'm sendin' you another.' So I 'ad to get Bert to explain that there was no ink in the new mob, and that I was afraid I'd get the pen pinched if I used it, see? Dolly swallowed that one too, and so for these two years Bert's wrote in pencil. Then they sent me on this 'ere course—it's a good thing my mob's not far. I goes over every Saturday and Bert does the letter and I comes back and posts it from here—I told the wife I was sent on a technical course, see? Well, it is sort of technical, ain't it?"

Pte. Coia was calling for help. "Sarge, tella me how I write dis: 'Dearest Margarita' (yesterday it was Antonia, last week Anna and Constanzia), 'I thinka you all time I come see you send thus an embrace'—Is that good wrote, Sarge?"

Pte. Coia was my star turn. He wrote letters for all the boys. Pte. Rhyddoch's wife had sent a very nasty one back on learning that Pte. Rhyddoch was coming "on leev with little ATS girlfrend Anita." Of course, I had to make a few alterations before reading the letter to Pte. Rhyddoch. I left Pte. Coia to attend to Pte. Angus's vowel sounds.

At the week-end I came on Corporal Joy and his wife in a café. He beckoned me over to his table. They both seemed to be rather worried about something. "Just choose what you want, Dolly," Corporal Joy was saying, and he slipped a gravy-stained menu over to her. She stared at it and handed it on to me. "What about the Sarge choosing for all of us?" she said hastily. Later, while the Corporal was absent for a moment, she asked me how he was making out on his Wireless course. "Of course," she said, "Tom's eddicated. You know 'ow it is: I've never liked to tell 'im; it's been a blessing 'aving Ma at home—for 'is letters, I mean. I know it ain't nothing to be ashamed of, seeing as I never 'ad the opportunity, still 'e wouldn't like it if 'e knew, you know."

I agreed that it might be rather a shock to him if he did.

At the Pictures

NO OFFENCE

As not by the remotest chance can anything here written keep you away from *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (Director: SAM WOOD) if you already mean to go to it, I can with equanimity admit that I found some of it dull. This must be the fault of the film, for I think dullness is something that can seldom be laid to the charge of Mr. HEMINGWAY. Too much is made, in the wrong way, of the preliminaries to the blowing-up of that bridge, and too much is made throughout, mostly in the wrong way, of the love-story; although in a film of course one can't expect anything else. Except for the comparatively minor influence of such circumstances as that the girl's hair is very short (but of course becomingly), it is largely the usual love-story. I like INGRID BERGMAN and GARY COOPER, but it would be misleading to suggest that they make this the particular love-story of the Hemingway book. (One school of thought holds that even there the episode was out of place.)

In the film there are some outstandingly good things: KATINA PAXINOU's *Pilar*, for instance, is undoubtedly terrific, and the screen radiates dramatic energy when she is on. The flashback for her crackling narrative of the early days of the war, dubious as is the excuse for its inclusion, is made electric by her voice and the momentary shots of her as she is speaking. Two more excellent performances are AKIM TAMIROFF's as *Pablo* and JOSEPH CALLEIA's as *El Sordo*. There is also some well-managed suspense in the moments before the blowing-up of the bridge: here, the extreme and loving concentration upon every detail of every action, wearisome in the early sequences, is justified.

But the impressiveness of the picture is spoilt by two things: one, the fact that it lasts for two hours and three-quarters only because of that spinning-out of detail; the other, the fact that politically it is

a calculated bit of fence-sitting. One feels that the actual sight (in that flashback) of Republican excesses (Fascist ones are merely spoken of, and not in the raw, powerful, emphatic

anxious effort to make up to General Franco for the fact that the "hero" and "heroine" of the story are on the side that fought against him.



[For Whom the Bell Tolls]

BRIDGE-BLOWING PERSONNEL

tones of *Pilar* but in the gentle sad voice of *Maria*) was included in an

from all the players concerned: PAUL HENRIED as the married man with whom the "fledgling" spends a week-end in Rio, GLADYS COOPER as her domineering mother, CLAUDE RAINS as the psychiatrist, and many in smaller parts.



J.H.P.

[Now, Voyager]

LANDING KIT

(Fresh from a Pleasure-Cruise)

Charlotte Vale BETTE DAVIS

For good emotional acting of a subtler kind than Mme. PAXINOU's, see BETTE DAVIS in *Now, Voyager* (Director: IRVING RAPPER). Here is the transformation (with the help of psychiatry) of a fat, gloomy, dowdy spinster with a nervous breakdown into a spectacularly smart, slim, cheerful young lady of irresistible charm. Miss DAVIS takes the obvious chances well in the early part of the picture, achieving a notable intensity of hysteria; but she is also excellent in the more delicate portrayal of the transitional stage, when the "fledgling" (as the psychiatrist calls her) is timidly testing her social powers and discovering with astonishment that she is taken at her face value, admired, liked and even loved.

The story of all this is made unexpectedly absorbing by good performances

What surprised me about *Yellow Canary* (Director: HERBERT WILCOX) was that although all the notices I read before I saw it had self-consciously kept quiet about the plot, as requested, I seemed to realize the secret from the first. The picture is an entertaining example of the British spy-and-counter-spy thriller, in which half the people in sight are pretending to be on A's side so as to make B think they are really on B's side and pretending not to be to deceive A, whereas they are really deceiving B by . . . well, you know the kind of thing. There are plenty of narrative clichés here, but they are used with enough skill to make the film enjoyable; and ANNA NEAGLE is able to get away for a time from that aura of dignity and noble loftiness of mind with which the films have hitherto insisted on surrounding her. R. M.

Confessions and Suppressions

IN 1919 the notorious wrongdoer, Angus McOrbit, invited me to join him as junior partner. He was about to pose as an unemployed fire-watcher (a "snuffer" in those days) and he wanted someone to carry on the regular business from Covent Crescent during his absence. Need I say what answer I gave? At twenty-two I found myself in complete control of a going concern. I had very little to do. At ten o'clock every morning I banked McOrbit's takings for the previous day, answered any summonses there might be, and did half an hour's practice on the piano-forte. By 11.30 A.M. I was free. A wild dash by taxi and I was with Hobbs at the Oval or Suzanne Lenglen at Wimbledon. Glorious days! McOrbit was an astute fellow. He realized that sooner or later there would be another war—one that would leave him too old to pose successfully as an unemployed fire-watcher. He wanted me to be ready to step (as it were) into his make-up. Sometimes he would make me spend the whole day with him—or rather near him—so that I might study his methods. He would sit cross-legged on the pavement—an abject figure. At his feet stood two metal cups—one marked "Coin of the Realm" and the other "Counterfeit British and Foreign Coins." McOrbit had been driven to this by the alarming increase of "bad money" in his takings. At his side he displayed the cheque books of the "Big Five" joint-stock banks, and a notice announced that he was prepared to receive first-class home bills and other commercial paper up to six months. He never handled Rumanian Railway Stock.

In February 1924 McOrbit caught a severe chill, died suddenly at his home, 27 Grosvenor Road, West Filing, and was buried in a pauper's grave. It was a lesson that I never forgot. For six short months I lived happily on his capital. Then, when all hopes of avoiding part-time work seemed gone, I came into possession of a document which affected my whole future. It was only slightly larger than a postage-stamp but it contained this interesting information: "This chocolate left our factory in perfect condition. If, for any reason, it is found to be unsatisfactory it should be returned with the sender's name and address. It will be replaced free of charge and postage will be refunded." For many



"About that skylight of yours, Mrs. Brown—there's a new order come round, and in future, whenever I have to warn you about it, I shall have to warn you that it's the last warning you'll get."

months practically everything I bought became unsatisfactory in some way or another. I made most of the commodities unsatisfactory by spraying them with dilute hydrochloric acid or leaving them to weather on the compost heap. Almost without exception the replacements made by grateful manufacturers far exceeded the value of my original outlay. In this way I built up the "Acne" chain of cut-price stores which provided me with a livelihood until the depression of 1931.

And now, I fear, I sank rather deeper into crime than I really bargained for.

I began to write letters to large firms telling them that their products had done more than was ever claimed for them and that I had no objection to my praises appearing in their advertising matter. All these letters were written from bogus addresses and signed fictitiously. As soon as a letter appeared in print I visited the offices of the company, inspected (as invited) the originals of this and other unsolicited testimonials and pointed out an obvious forgery.

Neither of my two sons suspects that their fees at one of our great public schools are being paid in hush-money.



"Mt. me Stb. Ken. Stn. Wed. aft. at 3 . . ."

Bus Stop

O WHAT are you doing so lengthily queueing,
Ungainly of figure, revolting of mien,
Extended ahead of me, taking instead of me
Every seat on a Number Thirteen?

You should not be scorning the Government's warning
That transport is scarce, and intended to be
Not for idlers and shirkers (like you) but for workers
Whose business is vital and urgent (like me).

Not one of your journeys of any concern is
Compared with the prior importance of mine
(For I'm off to the theatre, followed by teatre
Relative's flat in S.W.9).

O shameful wrongdoers, unspeakable queuers,
How bitter the feelings you raise in my mind . . .
But how pleasant to savour the equal disfavour
Directed on me by the people behind!

The fact that goods made of raw materials in short supply owing to war conditions are advertised in this paper should not be taken as an indication that they are necessarily available for export.

At Lyndhurst Lodge

The Cupboard Under the Stairs

WHERE is the pump?" I asked.
Though there is a plenitude of bicycles in this establishment there is only one pump, and opinion differs rather widely as to the best place to keep it. Naturally it is kept in the garage where the bicycles are; there can be no dispute about that. What I mean is that there are a great many places in the garage in which, or on which, or against which a bicycle-pump can with skill and patience be stood, balanced, or leant. Since the car went the garage has, by general consent, become the repository for all those things that had always seemed a little bit of a nuisance wherever else one put them—prams and deck-chairs and cardboard boxes and old ivory paper-knives; so that the would-be tyre blower-upper is well advised to inquire where the pump was last put before beginning his search. I don't mean that the pump will be where it was last put, but at least the area of operations will be restricted: there will be, so to speak, a limit to the number of objects behind which, or into which, or beneath which it can reasonably have slipped, overbalanced or rolled.

So I went into the hall and asked in a loud voice where the pump was.

I got three replies, for what they were worth. John, from the morning room, said I had had it myself last (a lie), Brenda called out from the kitchen that she thought it was in the cupboard under the stairs, and up on the second floor old Mr. Colquhoun opened his door and cried "What is it? Am I wanted? Is there anything I can do?"

"In the cupboard under the stairs!" I repeated incredulously. "What on earth is the point of putting it in the cupboard under the stairs?"

The fact is we never put it in the cupboard under the stairs. This cupboard is kept for things you might want to use without having to go out in the rain for them. Thus you will find the vacuum-cleaner there and one or two gas-masks and such perishable goods as tennis rackets and beer. Further back, admittedly, there are some articles you would never want to use, rain or no rain, such as an old broken mangle and a *History of the Soke of Peterborough* in nine volumes; they ought to be in the garage, only it is simpler to leave them where they are.

In any case why put the pump in such a place?

"Aunt Mary put it there," Brenda said.

"Oh," I said. "Oh, I see. Do you know whereabouts she put it, by any chance?"

"On top of the ironing-board, I expect. That's where she put the bacon, if you remember."

I could not have forgotten. Recollecting in tranquillity (as poets do) the emotions of that extraordinary occasion, I passed into the cupboard under the stairs and immediately struck my head with great violence against the underside of some tread or rise, as these things are called. When the faintness had passed I looked, without hope, on the top of the ironing-board, then underneath it, then with the aid of many matches alongside and behind and round about it. I also opened the lid of one of those long wooden boxes in which our ancestors used to keep croquet hoops and mallets, and, finding a pair of dark spectacles and a fine black beard mixed up with other curios, put them on and went incontinently to the morning-room.

"So!" I hissed, putting my head suddenly round the door. "I have caught you at last, my friend."

I make no apology for this. Some people, coming



"Think of me as an individual and not as a Lance-Corporal."

unexpectedly upon theatrical properties, pick them up, regard them with mild surprise and put them back again; others—and it seems to me the natural thing to do—dress themselves up and hiss "Fly at once. All is discovered," round some convenient door. It is a matter of taste, I suppose. But I confess that had I known John was not alone I might have chosen some other door and certainly some less unhappy phrase.

"What's the idea?" said John stiffly. "Wearing that fool beard."

"I thought you wouldn't know who it was," I said sadly. "Sorry."

"You'd have to put on a false nose as well," he said, "if you want to take anybody in."

"Gracious!" said the Wren sweetly, "I thought he had."

I went back to my cupboard without another word. If John likes to bring a Wren into the house and hold her hand in the morning-room, well and good; I see no great impropriety in that. And if he says nothing about it to anyone he has only himself to thank if somebody opens the door too quickly and makes him look a bit of a fool. But it can't be right that I should be made to feel a fool too. Beards are double-edged things in that way.

"Fell a bit flat," I said to myself as I groped my way forward in the darkness, and instantly did the same thing myself. There is an old iron fender jammed up against the croquet box, and I suppose I caught my foot in it and overbalanced. It wasn't a heavy fall—a pilot, I dare say, would have called it a three-point landing—but it made a great deal of noise in that confined space. One clutches in these moments of crisis at the first thing that offers, and what came to hand in my case was a bird-cage that has hung as long as any of us can remember on a nail beside the gas-meter. Now a bird-cage suspended in the sunshine by a window and full of the pleasant song of canaries is an airy, lightsome thing, but sweeping in a great arc through the darkness of a cupboard at the full stretch of a man's arm it can become a terrible engine of destruction. Brushes and pans give way before it, ewers disintegrate at its touch, even an old mangle, mute and inglorious these many years, may be startled into a resonant clang.

I now found myself further inside the cupboard than I

ever remember to have been before; but in other respects my situation was an unenviable one. One of my feet had lodged in the croquet box and, since the other refused to be parted from it, the whole of my rear was left in the air (an uncomfortable position, as any military correspondent would agree), and I was forced, in order to keep my face off the floor, to take the whole of my weight on my left forearm. That this was a serious drawback I realized as soon as I tried to brush off my head some of the quantities of sand that had fallen on it out of the flying bird-cage, for I naturally tried to use my other hand for this office and found that that too was not at my disposal; the fingers were firmly gripped between the wires of that infernal cage. When I pulled, the mangle gave another grumbling clang, but that was all.

I don't know how long I lay in this curious position. I was not, I think, unhappy, nor even particularly anxious to get out. I seemed to have lost all desire for bicycling, and wondered, I remember, that I should have put myself to so much trouble for the sake of a pump. I began to count up to ten thousand, a thing which in the ordinary way I never have time to do.

Somewhere in the two-thousand-four-hundreds I heard old Mr. Colquhoun's voice behind me. "I thought I heard a noise," he said gently. "Is there anything I can do?"

With a tremendous effort I raised myself on my left hand and turned my face into the glare of his electric torch.

"If you would be so good," I began—then the door of the cupboard slammed shut, I heard the key turn in the lock and old Mr. Colquhoun's voice calling excitedly for John.

Pondering these things—and now a little mortified, for my arm was getting numb and my head itched—it came to me suddenly that I was still wearing that unfortunate beard and glasses.

H. F. E.



"Sorry, mate—bein' a crane-driver in the R.E.'s automatically disqualifies yer."



"I hope I won't have to stand with my back to the engine."

Words, Words, Words

THE scene—a morning train for town.
She entered with a shrinking man,
Lit up, and settled calmly down;
Then she began,

And from that point to Waterloo,
Regardless of her broken friend
The lady talked for nearly two
Good hours on end.

Her voice was low; its tone was flat;
And all the time I never heard
(And humbly thank the gods for that)
One blessed word.

Only I saw that long stream glide
For ever like the poet's brook,
And on the sad face at her side
A sadder look.

At first a murmured Yea or Nay
Faintly escaped him now and then
While he looked round and seemed to say
"I ask you, men."

But, later, silent and withdrawn
He sat as one in numbed despair
And when he once confessed a yawn
She didn't care.

And still as onward drove the train
And no pause came however small
"Had she," one asked, "a power of brain
Or none at all?"

Till I observed at Waterloo
That she was at it e'en when walking:

* * * * *

I don't believe the woman knew
That she was talking.

DUM-DUM.



MARSH-FIRE

[On November 26th a hundred and thirty-one years ago Napoleon's armies, retreating from Moscow, reached the Beresina, which joins the Dneiper near Gomel.]

Times Aren't What They Were.

ONCE upon a time there was a Miss Muffet who was called little Miss Muffet, for the perfectly sound reason that she was an only child and therefore, for a number of years, was quite tiny—or little—compared with the rest of the Muffet family.

In those days families had a thing called Family-Life, and we are not concerned here with the terrible damage that it is held by modern thinkers to have wrought, nor yet with the utter incredulity that it meets with from people under twenty-five years of age.

It must be assumed, by any student of the past reading this rather historical anecdote, that in Family-Life times there had to be a father and a mother, living in the same house on outwardly pleasant terms with one another, a few excellent and devoted servants, a non-pedigree dog called Tray, and from five to fifteen children. It was, in those days, the misfortune of the Muffet establishment that they had only one child—this little Miss Muffet, whose proper name was Maria Amelia. This child had a nursery, a night-nursery, a strict nurse, and a daily governess; she went downstairs into the drawing-room every day between five o'clock and six o'clock, and put into practice some rules, long since outmoded and forgotten, concerned with good manners.

Her governess taught her French, battledore and shuttlecock, history, geography, arithmetic, drawing, painting, crochet, dancing, needlework, and the game of Halma. As little Miss Muffet was sadly unmusical she also had to spend a great deal of time practising on the piano and learning to sing.

The good governess did not have to teach her reading and writing, because when she arrived Miss Muffet was nearly three years old and had already learnt these things at her mother's knee. (In the old times of which I write, the knees of mothers were never seen, but they were always there—however invisible—and children learnt at them.)

It would take too long, and be rather invidious, to make a list of all the things that did not enter into the life-pattern of the Muffet family—such as American gangsters, sherry-parties, film-stars, crooners, the B.B.C. programmes, personal remarks, child-psychology, the absence of domestic help, information concerning life in Russia, and ice-cream cornets.

(Miss Muffet did once eat a strawberry ice, at a wedding-breakfast, and thought it was terribly cold and had some rather horrible lumps in it, and as the whole thing disagreed with her she was given some calomel that very same evening and told that she mustn't be so tiresome. And, as a result, she never was again.)

Little Miss Muffet was, on one occasion, sitting in her day-nursery upon a tuffet. It would be of no use to look for a tuffet amongst utility furniture, and if one was, by any unlikely chance, unearthed in an antique shop, it would cost immense sums and be discovered to have the moth in it at the end of it all. But in the practically prehistoric days of little Miss Muffet a thing like a tuffet was more or less taken for granted in any well-furnished home, and descended from one generation to another, and if moth had ever been found in it—which it never was—some housemaid would have been dismissed in deep disgrace, and probably in tears as well.

On this tuffet, in front of a large coal fire, Miss Muffet sat neatly and tidily, with a silver spoon in her right hand and a bowl of curds and whey in her left hand.

She was eating her supper.

All of a sudden a rather scuffling sound became audible and Miss Muffet, alarmed, glanced downwards and saw beside her a large sprawling animal with a good many legs. She felt certain, from what she remembered of *The Child's Guide to Knowledge*, that it was a spider, and she was thoroughly frightened.

But—and this is the part that may present difficulties to a modern reader—little Miss Muffet had been taught the now obsolete lesson of politeness.

Putting down the bowl of curds and whey, but carrying the spoon, she quietly withdrew from the vicinity of the spider.

Long years afterwards, when Miss Muffet was in her late nineties and had seen a good many changes, she related this story as being among her earliest remembrances. Her listeners, who had hoped to hear something about Waterloo, or Trafalgar, or the introduction of the Penny Post, were disappointed.

They tried to make the best of it by suggesting that the affair of the spider had affected her whole psychological make-up and probably accounted for all the major errors of her life.

Miss Muffet, polite to the end, smiled and said that perhaps that was so, but she could not call to mind ever having made any major errors in her life.

E. M. D.

Fight Against Fatigue

WHAT would the ordinary Welfare and Industrial Relations Officer give, I wonder, to receive a note such as this?

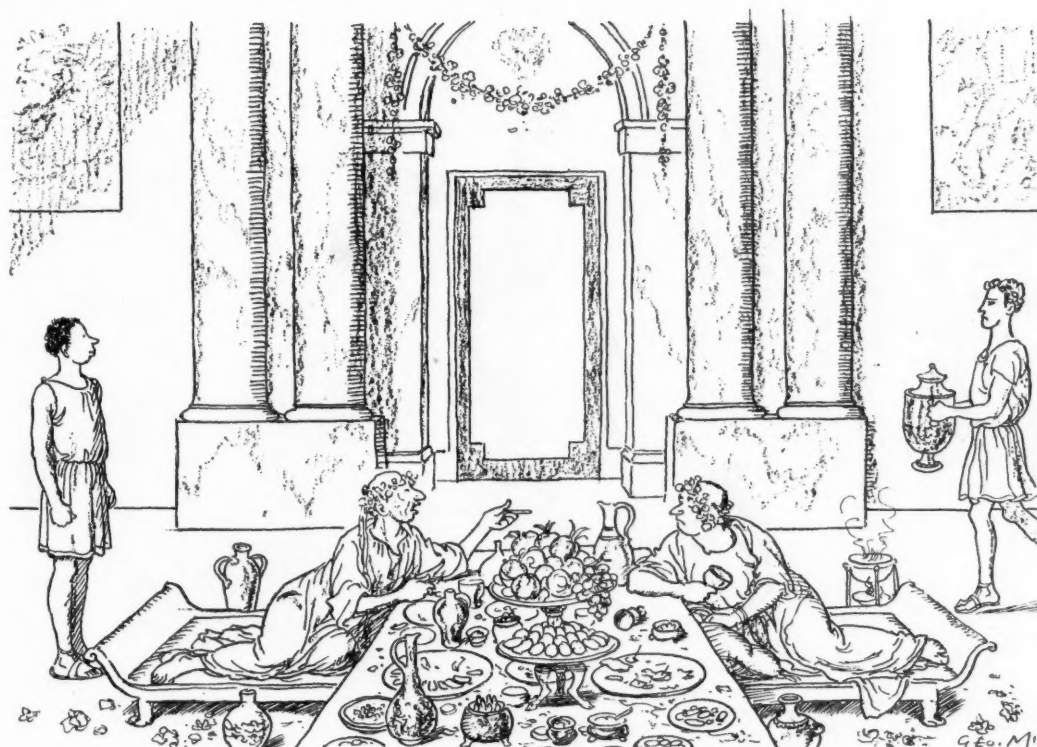
LET ME HAVE SOMETHING ABOUT YOUR FACTORY STOP ANYTHING STOP ANY MORTAL THING STOP FIX OWN TERMS STOP WITHOUT DELAY STOP OBDIENT SERVANT EDITOR STOP

Did I feel elated? Not a bit of it. I realized immediately that the message was no more than a reflection of the public's insatiable demand for the details of our war production. The Snacker and Dipocket Small Things Co. (1928), Ltd., is one cog in an enormous chain. I can do no more than throw a little light prose on that one cog.

Ten months ago we were "taken over." Various and often contradictory reasons for this drastic step have appeared from time to time in the popular Press.



"If you're not listening at the moment please switch off and save fuel."



"Well, who gets the blame if the invasion goes wrong—you or Julius Caesar?"

"It is sad to reflect that our productive system can no longer find room for disinterested craftsmen."—*Pilot*.

"S. and D. employees have flooded the market with hand-knitted comforts for the Forces."—*Evening Guardian*.

"The last of the sturdy beggars have been conscripted."—*Hope*.

"A major cause of the crisis was the lack of generalship shown by the officers of this private enterprise."

Fulsome's Weekly.

The truth of the matter is revealed below. Towards the end of 1942 I was gravely disturbed by numerous signs of chronic fatigue in our workers. We had already done our best to ease working conditions. The canteen had been renamed "Cafeteria" and had introduced one dried-egg-less day each week. The "Music While You Work" programmes had been discontinued. All this and more had been done, but the malignant disease still flourished unchecked. Absenteeism declined—the employees finding it less arduous to attend than to think up even lame excuses for staying away. Strikes were unknown for the same reason. Tempers

were woefully short. A dispute over the thickness of a bit of armour-plating would often lead to an inter-departmental brawl. War-weariness was rife.

The task of finding a remedy fell, not unnaturally, to me. At first I experimented with longer breaks, but the warm welcome that greeted their introduction soon gave way to bitter criticism of the facilities for their proper enjoyment. It was suggested that if the breaks were fixed at the beginning and end of the working day they could be enjoyed in the comfort of the workers' own homes. The logic of this statement appealed very strongly to the management, and the suggestion was adopted. Unfortunately the sharp reduction in output which followed was not accompanied by an inversely proportionate improvement in the health of the workers. We hunted desperately for the elusive remedy.

Our next moves were more successful. We began to increase and extend the range of our dealings with subcontractors. As soon as a worker

complained of fatigue or ennui we made arrangements for his extra-mural assistance. By the end of the year the accident-rate had fallen to zero and the general health of the factory was excellent. A more loyal band of employees it would be difficult to imagine.

We were "taken over" in January. In response to a popular demand for a declaration of the Government's policy concerning post-war transport we were switched over to experimental tanks. Many people feel that the U.S.A. with its enormous manufacturing potential will forge ahead of Britain when peace comes. They are overlooking the work of Snacker and Diplocket's. If our plans for post-war air services are being made with the same thoroughness that we are putting into our blueprints for the people's utility tank the Empire has no need to worry.

o o

"Wilton carpet, 3ft. x 3ft., almost new, £40."—*Advt. in local paper.*

Complete with frame?



"I want to order 'War and Peace' for Peter's eighteenth birthday."

English Islands or Lost Off Labrador

VIII

BUT what," you may well say, "is all this about? Why are you fog-bound off Labrador eating sea-gulls and salt cod?"

Well, you know, citizen and comrade, you know very little about Newfoundland, "our oldest Colony." And the House of Commons does not know too much. So His Majesty's Government sent three of us to acquire knowledge—to find out, among other things, what Newfoundland was thinking and wanting.

"But surely," you will say, "our oldest Colony can tell us what she is thinking and wanting without a visit from three Members of Parliament?" Unhappily that is not so (and this is the core of the whole conundrum). The Newfoundlanders, at the moment, can tell us what they are thinking or wanting only (a) by writing to the papers, or (b) by rioting. They do not like (b); and they say that (a) is ineffective.

Ten years ago, under the bludgeonings of chance, the compulsion of finance, and the request of her own Parliament, Newfoundland handed her latch-key—in other words, her independence—to the United Kingdom "until such time as she is self-supporting". Since then she has been governed by a queer species of oligarchy called the "Commission of Government"—three Commissioners from the United Kingdom (Civil Servants) and three Newfoundlanders, all appointed by and responsible to the Crown.

This, I suppose, must be the most uncomfortable and thankless job in the whole Imperial puzzle. If the three British Commissioners were men as able as Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin they would still be outsiders: if the three Newfoundlanders were men with the reputation of their great Sir Robert Bond they would still be appointed by the British Crown and

not elected by the people. They have all the temptations—and some of the reputation—of tyrants: but not the powers. For, while the islanders deplore (sometimes, justly or not) their "autocratic" behaviour, they must refer, in the things that matter, and some that don't, to the far-distant Dominions Office and Treasury. This odd regime has endured for ten years; and the surprising thing is that it is not more unpopular than it is—in an island which first enjoyed "responsible government" in 1855, and was the oyster-bed of the Atlantic Charter. If we had had the same (unelected) Government in Britain for ten years and three Newfoundland citizens came to inquire what we thought about it, it is easy to imagine the kind of things we should say.

They are not all said—and they are not said by all—in Newfoundland. That is one of the puzzles—and one of the few compliments the poor

Commissioners receive. "Commission Government" has done some fine work: and naturally it has done some bad. Its saddest failures seem to have been in the field of imagination—the handling of people's minds (as opposed to their finances). We were taken to see "Colonial House"—the building which used to contain the two Legislative Chambers. As Members of the House of Commons, still free and vocal, we approached the place with proper reverence. I thought we should see these Chambers unpeopled but respected; the Speaker's Chair empty but intact. I thought to see, perhaps, a Newfoundlander at the door of the House of Assembly with his children, saying: "That is where your fathers used to make the laws of Newfoundland: and that, please God, is where the Newfoundlanders will make their laws again."

I saw no such thing. The Speaker's Chair was not empty: it was not there. The Bar was not there. All the furniture of a Parliament more than a hundred years old has been stripped and put away in a loft—nobody quite knows where. The place was occupied by Civil Servants. Excellent Civil Servants, no doubt; doing good work for the Department of Natural Resources, which is run by one of the best of the Commissioners. But I thought: How should I feel if I went back to England and found the House of Commons full of Civil Servants, however good, doing work, however necessary, by the orders of another Power, however friendly?

Then I thought: Perhaps all this is fanciful and foolish. Newfoundland is very short of Government buildings (although it has all the wood in the world), and after all, we are at war. But when I talked to some sensible citizens I found that that rape of their little Parliament had been resented badly and rankled still. This unimaginative act was done in peace-time, in cold blood, by the first Commissioners, Civil Servants themselves: and it fortifies the good old rule that no man is fit for absolute power. Almost equally resented was the eviction and dispersal of the Museum, a modest but unique record of the island's ancient history.

The surprising thing, as I remarked in public to the hospitable and friendly Rotarians, is that we do not seem to have given anyone a ninety-nine years' lease of the Parliamentary Chambers. This brings me to a delicate theme, on which I will say no more than is whispered by the Newfoundlanders in the clubs and sometimes muttered in a leading article.

When France fell, and it was feared by most of the American continent (not the Newfoundlanders) that England was out on her feet, some prompt and energetic moves were made to defend the Western Hemisphere against the Hun let loose. The United States, you remember, let us have fifty destroyers and we let her have "bases" in the West Indies and elsewhere. No part of Newfoundland was concerned in that transaction, they say: but the island was a first-class strategic corner, and both America and Canada, at vast expense, built great stations and bases there—sea, land, and air—and sent many thousands of fine troops to man them. This was not done purely for love of little Newfoundland or purely for the defence of the American continent, but for the defence of all the things that the English-speaking peoples were fighting for everywhere: and there is not the smallest reason to suppose that little Newfoundland (if she had been self-governing still) would have done anything but welcome the friendly (and, for the time being, remunerative) invaders, as she has done. Indeed it is a fine thing to see the four Governments and peoples (including ours) in happy harness in that one small island. But Newfoundland is not self-governing, at the moment: nor, on the other hand, is she like a West Indian island, the whole of which, in theory, the Crown could give away to-morrow if it thought fit. And therefore, when they see us handing out ninety-nine year leases of important sections of their soil (or rather when they hear about it afterwards) these loyal and good-tempered people do raise a wondering eyebrow, without questioning for a moment the fine work and lavish expenditure of their big cousins from the continent. It has always been a sad complaint of the islanders that they had so little to sell the world. Now that the Air Age has discovered them on the direct route from New York to Moscow and London they feel that they have something to sell: and it is a little odd to see someone else handing out ninety-nine year leases. Well, that is putting it crudely. No doubt there are arguments all ways; and this particular matter is ancient history. The point is, at the moment, if similar matters pop up, they are not able to argue—nor do they always know what is being done.

"Well," you say, "but all this has a queer sound. Can it not be ended? Is Newfoundland self-supporting now or not?" "At the moment, yes. Indeed, she has been lending money to the Old Country. There is no unemployment

and fair prosperity." "Very well, then," you say, "let her govern herself again." "Ah, but it is not so easy. Much of the present employment, high wages, prosperity is purely war-stuff. After the war, when the thousands of sailors and soldiers and loggers return, when the American and Canadian bases are no longer handing out agreeable packets of dollars; when Iceland and others are in the fishing market again—there may be less employment, less prosperity: indeed there may be deficits again." "Oh!" you say—"well, that may happen anywhere. Don't they want to govern themselves again?" "That," I then have to answer sadly, "is the awful thing. They don't seem to know."

What with tidal waves, hurricanes, fires, bank-failures and political crises, poor Newfoundland has suffered enough shocks in the last hundred years to sink an ordinary island. Eleven or twelve years ago a Royal Commission descended on them and said hard things about their politics and politicians. They do not accept all these—but they do accept some. They say, most of them, that they do not want to return to "Responsible Government" if it is like it was before. In short, they would like to go horse-riding again if they can be sure of having a better horse than the one that threw them: and meanwhile it is no bad fun to belabour the poor old donkey that is drawing the cart.

Into this simple kettle of fish the Secretary of State for the Dominions decided to send a Parliamentary Mission "of a goodwill character". I do not envy the Dominions Office, or anyone in charge. But now you know why I am eating sea-gulls off the coast of Labrador.

A. P. H.

Balancing Feet

"We had just unlocked the safe," he said, "when two men burst into the room. One was wearing a soft brown hat, aged between 35 and 46, and more than 6ft. tall."

Daily paper.

"Electric Lamp Manufacturers require a Representative with sound connection."

Advt. in Manchester paper.

Now, anybody got a switch?

"Swooping to a few hundred feet, Nazi planes dropped parachutists on to a narrow plateau, then climbed over a 10 ft. wall, and there was Mussolini at an upstairs window."—Belfast paper.

Looking down at the planes in surprise.

At the Play

"AN IDEAL HUSBAND" (WESTMINSTER)

THE serious parts of WILDE are so deplorably trivial. The improbable carelessness of Lady Windermere with her fan, the unlikelihood of her inability to recognize her own mother, the ringing but empty disdain of that woman of no importance Mrs. Arbuthnot—how we yawn nowadays at the non-witty portions of those earlier plays devised before WILDE came to realize the importance of not being earnest, and so wrote his masterpiece! Even *An Ideal Husband*, which came along in 1895 and just six weeks before that crown of his theatrical life, has its ponderous core, though there are signs already that Wilde is not wholly serious about his seriousness. On the morning after the first night the most august of the newspapers—it was still some years before the advent of Walkley—allowed the play to succeed like its author's earlier pieces: "It is a similar degree of success due to similar causes. For *An Ideal Husband* is marked by the same characteristics as *Lady Windermere's Fan* and *A Woman of No Importance*. There is a group of well-dressed men and women on the stage, talking a strained, inverted, but rather amusing idiom, while the action, the dramatic motive, of the play, springs from a conventional device of the commonest order of melodrama."

William Archer sedulously disentangled the plot, explained in detail how *Sir Robert Chiltern* when just about to enter the Cabinet was blackmailed by a certain *Mrs. Cheveley*, how *Lady Chiltern* became involved, and how *Mrs. Cheveley* was eventually (as we should say nowadays) double-crossed by *Lord Goring*, witty flâneur and true friend of the *Chilterns*. This done, Archer with an engaging disingenuousness exclaimed: "Upon my honour (if the creator of *Sir Robert Chiltern* will forgive the Pharisaism), I had not the slightest intention when I sat down of picking the play to pieces in this way. I don't know what possessed me. *An Ideal Husband* is a

very able and entertaining piece of work, charmingly written, wherever Mr. Wilde can find it in his heart to sufflaminate his wit." (Who persists in saying that Archer had no humour? It is a humour as exquisitely dry as a Tio Pepe sherry.)

Mr. Shaw, somewhat less literal-minded than Archer, saw through the plot and discerned "a subtle and pervading levity" in the whole piece. He forbore examining its detail: "It is useless to describe a play which has no thesis: which is, in the purest integrity, a play and nothing less."



THE FALLEN IDEAL

Lady Chiltern MISS ROSEMARY SCOTT
Mrs. Cheveley MISS MARTITA HUNT
Sir Robert Chiltern, Bart. MR. MANNING WHILEY

And C. E. Montague waited until the play was in print before uttering the last word: "In drama Wilde ran so short in architectural skill that he would hang full panoplies of his brilliants upon a worn-out clothes-horse of a plot like that of *An Ideal Husband*." And again: "It proves how indolently a man of comic genius may write a comedy and yet not fail. . . . As a mainspring for plays the blackmailing lady who keeps whole catacombs of dark pasts, steals jewels freely, and is received at embassies, may indeed be junior to the everlasting hills—it depends on the age of the hills—but the world of stormed barns and penny gaffs has no older inhabitant. Then the tangle of the plot is not

really disentangled at all; it is merely exorcised; miracles happen whenever Wilde cannot undo one of his knots."

But the play stays witty in its trimmings. Montague perceived this well, and had a Shavian perspicience oddly combined with a Puritanical doubt in catching the tone of that wit: "The play is so drenched in comedy that it cannot but keep an audience laughing; but with the laughter there seems to go some perplexity; one fancies an uneasy sense of something alien to the spectator's blood, and of a blurring of the confines of lawful fun and levity."

The great virtue of the new production is the witty intelligence that has gone to the leavening of this polite drama of the middle nineties. It was witty of Mr. ROBERT DONAT, now in management at the Westminster, to engage Mr. REX WHISTLER to contrive the most breath-takingly ninetyish clothes, scenes, and furnishings ever seen since the nineties were first invented. They are possibly even gayer—they are certainly even better lit—than the nineties themselves were. But that is a fault to which only the oldest and most literal-minded fogies are likely to take exception.

It was shrewdly witty, too, to engage Miss MARTITA HUNT for the adventuress (since this actress knows better than almost any other how to give feminine villainy a twinkle), Dame IRENE VANBRUGH and Mr. ROLAND CULVER for the chief utterers of epigrams,

Mr. ESMÉ PERCY and Miss PEGGY BRYAN for respective style and decorativeness, and Mr. MANNING WHILEY and Miss ROSEMARY SCOTT to do perhaps as much as can be done with the sawdusty *Chilterns*.

The clothes are an especial delight, and it is a clinching piece of wit to have dressed *Mrs. Cheveley*, for her third act, in a tremendously smart black gown adorned with pink ribbons. For this takes the mind directly back to a remark of WILDE's in some other place: "Never trust a woman who wears mauve, whatever her age may be, nor a woman over thirty-five who is fond of pink ribbons. It always means that she has a history."

A. D.

Dans la Queue

UNE femme (a woman, housewife).
Bonsoir (Good evening).

La queue (the queue). Bonsoir, madame (Good evening, madame).

La femme. Le dernier cinquante, est-il parti?

Un homme sardonique (a sardonic man). Madame, les derniers cinquante sont-ils partis, vous voulez dire.

La femme. Tous pleins?

L'homme. Confiturés. Les cochers n'arrêteraient pas (The coachmen would not stop—conditional).

Soldat (soldier). Je veux un cinquante aussi.

Un vieillard. Et moi, aussi. Je me promène avec la tante du jardinier et elle a des légumes à planter (So do I. I am walking with the gardener's aunt and she has some vegetables to plant).

La femme. Comme elle est industrieuse!

Une autre femme. J'attends un cinquante, moi. Je reviens de la ville où j'ai acheté du fromage, des œufs, du sucre, du thé, de la beurre, du riz, du spam, du . . .

La première femme. Bonté! Avez-vous tous ces points? (Goodness! Have you all those points?)

L'autre femme. Point.

La femme. Point de points? Puis, comment . . . ?

L'autre femme. J'ai un frère dans l'épicerie.

L'homme. Ah, le marché noir.

L'autre femme. Noirâtre.

Soldat. Quelle méchante femme! (What a wicked woman!)

L'homme. Méchantâtre.

Le vieillard (ventre à terre; hastily). Chantons, mes amis.

La queue.

"Sur le pont d'Avignon
On y danse, on y danse
Sur le pont d'Avignon
On y danse tout en rond"

Soldat. Pendant que je combats pour la patrie.

L'autre femme. Soldat mécontent! Chantez!

Soldat. Je n'ai pas envie de chanter, moi? (What have I got to sing about, eh?)

Le vieillard. Chantez la terre, le soleil, la victoire, Moscou et Washington, les choux et les rois.

La queue (en dansant autour du soldat):

"Les belles dames font comme ça
Et puis encore comme ça!"

Le soldat. Si ce n'est pas la limite glacée! (If this isn't the frozen limit!)

Un conducteur (arrivant). Tous les omnibus sont partis.



"Yes, she's always there. They say she waits for a Dover sole."

La queue. Nous sommes enchantés.

"Sur le pont d'Avignon
On y danse tout en rond."

[Exeunt, en dansant]

Le soldat. Je suis fromagé.

Le conducteur. Mais le jour viendra où on dansera à Avignon.

[Exit, sifflant]

Announcement

"HOLY MATRIMONY . . . It's a brand new, grand new discovery!"

Notice outside cinema.

"GERMANS BAN SEASONS"

Heading in "Daily Mail."

Having found the Russian summer offensive.

Making Quite Sure

From the South African Government Gazette Extraordinary: "(1) An employer shall employ a qualified boiler, a qualified maker of pickles, chutney, mayonnaise, squash or cordial, a qualified male clerical employee, a qualified factory clerk, and a qualified grade I employee before he may employ an unqualified boiler, an unqualified maker of pickles, chutney, mayonnaise, squash or cordial, an unqualified male clerical employee, an unqualified factory clerk or an unqualified grade I employee respectively and he shall employ not less than one qualified boiler, one qualified, maker of pickles, chutney, mayonnaise, squash or cordial, one qualified male clerical employee, one qualified factory clerk and one qualified grade I employee for each unqualified boiler, unqualified maker of pickles, chutney, mayonnaise, squash or cordial, unqualified male clerical employee, unqualified factory clerk, or unqualified grade I employee employed by him."

Our Booking-Office

(By Mr. Punch's Staff of Learned Clerks)

Two Saints

As well as the pictorial vividness and insight into character with which Miss V. SACKVILLE-WEST portrays St. Teresa of Avila and St. Thérèse of Lisieux, *The Eagle and The Dove* (MICHAEL JOSEPH, 10/6) has the sincerity of a book which seems to have been written to enlarge the author's own understanding of life. Miss SACKVILLE-WEST's approach to these two saints is neither that of a devout believer nor of a sceptic, but of someone unsatisfied by the appearance of things and eager to explore the reality beyond. "Even the most materially-minded amongst us," she writes, "know very well, in moments of fright and incertitude when an earthquake shudders the foundation of our pitiable structure, that our façade represents in no true way the answer lying somewhere else, behind it." In dealing with St. John of the Cross she allows her feeling that saints are in closer touch with this reality than other men to obscure his great limitations, but her St. Teresa and St. Thérèse remain human and credible throughout. Miss SACKVILLE-WEST calls her book "a study in contrasts," and it certainly disposes of the common notion that saints are all alike. Teresa of Avila, a Spanish aristocrat of the sixteenth century, was a brilliant vivacious woman, strongly attracted by the pleasures of life in her youth and driven to become a nun by fear of hell, not by love of God. During many years the division in her nature expressed itself in violent physical symptoms, paralysis, catalepsy, cardiac agony and terrible pains in the head. Then she experienced her first ecstasy, her faculties became harmonized, and she entered upon her great work of reforming the Carmelite Order, which occupied the last twenty years of her life. From inquisitors and archbishops to the youngest nun she managed everyone, by diplomacy, invective, tenderness, as the occasion required. "Let it be done at once," said a harassed Corregidor. "In spite of ourselves, we are all obliged to do whatever she wants." But her exercise of power did not arouse resentment, it was as selfless as is possible to human nature, and warmed by a love for individuals often absent in saints. St. Thérèse of Lisieux, who died less than fifty years ago, was of a completely different character—a gentle, unintellectual girl, whose whole nature was absorbed in the desire to become a saint. Although very delicate, she embraced the silence, cold and privations of the Carmelite Order with passionate ardour, and welcomed her early death as a translation to a sphere from which she could help humanity. Within a few years her spiritual autobiography was being read all over the world, and appeals for her intercession were producing miraculous cures. As a saint she seems to have stood in much the same relation to St. Teresa as, at the opposite extreme, Hitler, a medium of the mass desire for evil, stands to Rasputin, a man of singular though perverted genius.

H. K.

Making of Books

Authors who have been overheard to mutter "Now Barabbas was a publisher" will find only one piece of confirmatory evidence in *A Batsford Century* (BATSFORD, 10/6). And this is mere comic relief—a delightful Georgian cartoon of cringing hack and paunchy bookseller. For the rest, Mr. HECTOR BOLITHO has abundantly proved—if proof were needed—that there is nothing incompatible

between a producer's honest profits and his public services. Here you have a family business: begun in 1835 when Bradley Thomas Batsford, aged fourteen, came up from Hertford to be 'prenticed to his cousins the Bickers at their bookshop and bindery in Leicester Square. Thenceforward when outsiders joined the reigning Batsford, they took on, as did the staff, the family pride and the family special interests, above all an interest in English architecture. How much this last passion has meant to the firm and its customers this pleasant and original record shows. In showing it, and its technical background, tribute is rightly paid to the firm's "characters"—from Liz, their Suffolk charwoman, to Lathom, the lame photographer of so many City churches. Hobbling round the vulgarized interior of an old country house, Lathom, it is said, turned to the opulent owner: "Ateful and 'ideous. I'm glad I kept my cab." And he stumped out.

H. P. E.

Only "Gusto"

Many American writers disarm one with an almost Elizabethan and now famous exuberance, a readiness to sing on any subject, which is what critical jargon calls "gusto." Unlike the English, they evidently enjoy writing, but this enjoyment has nothing necessarily to do with merit, though it is sometimes mistaken for merit. For instance, *The Heart is a Lonely Hunter* (CRESETT PRESS, 9/6) certainly has this quality, yet its other qualities are more debatable. Leaving aside Miss CARSON McCULLERS' own enjoyment, let us simply say that she essays to take the temperature of a small American town, that this is decidedly feverish, and that after recording it she is at a loss how to proceed. The text is much the same as one of Tchekov's—that it is interesting and good to be alive, whatever the disappointments or heartbreak even. Her deaf-mute, into whom the oddest collection of acquaintances read the various qualities they lack themselves, follows the ending of a curious, unequal but satisfying friendship by putting a bullet through his head. Her schoolgirl, who has found Beethoven for herself, must abandon reverie to work in a shop. Her negro doctor, whose ambition is to make his race self-conscious, retires at last to a poor black's hovel. In short, this turbulent, generous and muddled novel is full of opportunities which Miss McCULLERS has been in too much of a hurry to take. A little less "gusto" and a little more hard thinking in her next book could only have profitable results for so vigorous a beginner.

J. S.

A Roundabout Way Home

The charm of *Rural Amateur* (COLLINS, 8/6) lies rather in its sympathetic recapture of the country cravings of a city-bound youth than in the almost accidental synthesis of dream and reality with which the story ends. To hark back to farming via a camera-man's services to war propaganda strikes one as a dangerous mode of reversion. So many war methods are necessary evils, and unless we are once more to envisage a peace to end peace some post-war change in the relative status of the town mouse and the country mouse must be expected. This, however, is not to suggest that Mr. CLIFFORD HORNBY lacks a countryman's instincts. He doesn't—but he is too easily persuaded to distrust them. He gives admirable advice on settling down in a country cottage, living in it as a countryman does until you see how much—surprisingly little—wants changing. But when he confronts farming for himself he dismisses plough-horses for tractors with a sigh for their regrettable beauty but none for their still more

regrettable muck. His early fervours—falconry, for example—are described with enthusiastic felicity; and an expedition with C. W. R. Knight to capture eyas peregrines on Lundy is one of the most interesting achievements of a life in which achievement counts. H. P. E.

Truth Unpalatable

If Mr. WALTER LIPPMANN seems to labour one or two arguments unduly in *U.S. Foreign Policy* (HAMISH HAMILTON, 6/-) it is because he is under urgent inward constraint towards American readers who have made contrary assumptions all their lives without ever realizing it. To start with he insists that the Monroe Doctrine has always been a joint affair between virtual allies, America having been able to rest secure on the Atlantic for nearly a hundred years not because of the inherent valour and virtues of her people but because the British Navy kept the seas. Perhaps it was not for us to make any such declaration. The curious thing is that it hardly occurred to us. Failing to appreciate this dependence Americans have acquired a dangerous habit of entering into commitments abroad—the defence of the Philippines, for instance—which they were in no position to meet. They went thousands of miles from their bases to the doors of Japan while simultaneously opposing Japan's own expansion and cutting down weapons of defence in the name of dignified idealism. They refused "entangling alliances," misreading the famous Jeffersonian phrase in doing so, while thrusting into world politics necessitating mutual support. They have become politically insolvent and now must pay an inflated price. Over here we may listen most closely to his conclusion that unity in alliance between America, Russia and this country is the inescapable geographically-imposed condition for the peace and increasing prosperity of the world. C. C. P.

Fantasy in Earnest

RONALD FRASER'S novels are like exquisite pieces—twentieth-century pieces—in a display cabinet, where they lie fragile, glittering and preserved from the dust. He sets to work on his London fantasies as a ballet designer does, arranging parks and streets, swans, chimney-pots and buses into a formal choreography. He has watched them long enough and devotedly enough to see the pattern emerge. Like this: "Across the river they could just see the Hovis Mills and the trees of Battersea Park, faint, fragrant groves. The bridge looked highly ethereal, a confection, a phantasm of shadows and half-invisible, cobwebby cables." Or this: "The house nestled under a weight of snow. There were red berries in the front garden, ferns in the window, and solid silver, reflecting a glowing fire, on the sideboard." This last quotation was from one of FRASER'S early books, *Flower Phantoms*, the first was from his new *The Fiery Gate* (CAPE, 7/6). The Fraserian vision is undimmed, even though this new novel is about a wardens' post in the blitz. But to many admirers there seems a falling-off since the publication of *Flower Phantoms*, that jewel in the lotus among contemporary literature. That, if you remember, was about a girl who worked in the plant-house at Kew Gardens and fell in love with an orchid—and nothing more. But since he wrote it RONALD FRASER has indulged more and more in two tendencies, a dreary left-wing literary-weekly type of social satire, and a wealth of smart dialogue which makes one long, unlike Alice, for a book without conversations. Both these things make the fine-spun fantasy of *The Fiery Gate* sag a little in the middle, beautifully and distinctively written though it is. P. M. F.

Home is the Sailor.

It will be difficult for any reader of Mr. JONAS LIED'S *Return to Happiness* (MACMILLAN 18/-) ever to shop again in Kensington High Street without seeing the buses as ice-floes broken from their stations and carrying unwilling passengers to danger, or the red traffic-lights as the pennants used for the ringing of wolves. For if Mr. JONAS LIED, a Norwegian business man, had not met a Mr. Derry in a French restaurant-car and lent him a copy of *The Times*, and if Mr. Derry had not introduced "the late Captain Wiggins" by sending his acquaintance a book entitled *The Life and Voyages of Captain Joseph Wiggins*, which suggested the possibility of making commercial sailings to and from Siberian rivers, the present book would never have been written. The story begins in Norway, where the Lieds administered and cultivated their estates, knew pride in their land and occasionally hankered after foreign parts. JONAS LIED shows himself to be a born hankerer. He was apprenticed to a firm of machinery dealers and then went to Cardiff. Germany was the next hunting ground, and then he met Mr. Derry, went to Russia, learned the language, traded in Siberia, became a Russian subject, journeyed through ice-floes with Nansen, was through the Revolution, saved Spitzbergen for Norway, finally regained his own nationality, and returned home to find, as Tolstoy said, "Your Jerusalem can be in your own village."

B. E. B.

Sir John Hammerton's Reminiscences

Sir JOHN HAMMERTON, whose popular encyclopædias have sold in millions during the last thirty-five years, is now living in retirement in Sussex. This very readable volume of reminiscences (*Other Things Than War*. MACDONALD, 10/6) is not, he says, intended to add to the current literature of escape. Most of it however is concerned with past years and dead persons, and it can therefore be read with an easy conscience by those who, while not wishing to escape from the war, are glad to forget it for an hour or so. Although he has travelled widely, and once edited a popular encyclopædia in Buenos Aires, Sir JOHN HAMMERTON reserves his deepest love for Fleet Street, "that highway of my heart," as he calls it; and among the best pages in his book are those which present Mr. Winston Churchill as a new member of the Fleet Street club, the Whitefriars, and Bernard Shaw recounting to the same club the circumstances which led to his arrival in a reefer suit at a dinner party attended by Mr. Balfour and the Asquiths. Sustained benevolence is apt to become wearisome, and Sir JOHN HAMMERTON can be critical of the famous persons he introduces. He finds the pother and fuss T. E. Lawrence made about everything he wrote nauseating, and he narrates with considerable humour how Mr. St. John Adcock, editor of *The Bookman*, was invited to lunch by Robert Bridges at Slater's in Oxford Street, and found himself sharing one portion of plaice and potatoes with his host, after which he repaired to the nearest Lyons for tea and poached eggs. Very interesting, too, in another vein is his account of what an article of five thousand words brought to Joseph Conrad—£200 for the article itself, £100 for the hand-written manuscript, £50 for the first draft of the typescript, and £100 for autographing a limited edition of the reprinted article. H. K.

Mr. Punch welcomes *Just a Few Lines* (METHUEN, 6/-). The verses, many of which will be familiar to our readers, are by A. W. B.; the drawings, by Fougasse, are new.



"What have you got to-day without any questions being asked?"

*The Truth About Conjurours**

By Smith Minor

GREEN thinks I ouhtn't to write this artickle, he saying, "It'll finish you."

"Well, I feal I ouht to take the risque," I said.

"Why?" he said.

"Becorse I keap on waking up as if a waight was on me like a pillow," I said.

"Perhaps it is a pillow," he said.

"Sometimes it is," I said, "only not generally."

"Well, supose you lose all your readers?" he said.

"I've worked that out," I said, wich I had, "and if I do, well, then somebody else's artickles will be in the space mine wuold of been in if they had been, they wuoldn't leave the

space blank, and who knows, it might be a good thing."

"It wuold be a good thing," he said.

"Then why are you trying to stop me?" I said.

"I meant it wuold be a good thing for others," he said, "but not for you."

"Oh," I said.

Anyhow, I'm going to write it. But as I don't want to get anybody else into trubble I think I'll camoofoage the name of the conjourer

"Who lured me from my dark retreat

Unto the pathway of deceat,"

and call him, say, Toop.

* Some. Author.

The dark retreat above menshuned was the back row of a hall where there was a Red Cross entertainment at wich this so-called Toop was conjouring. I wasn't in the back row to save money, please don't think that, one dosen't with the Red Cross, but I only hapened to have sixpence, having spent a shilling on some stuff for a canery that wasn't very well, and then another shilling on some other stuff to help it to get over the first stuff. It's best to leave caneries alone, really. Anyway, that's where I was, and when the conjourer came on I hoped the entertainment wuold buck up a bit, becorse you cuoldn't get away from it, up to then it had been well-meant but fowl. There had been three crouners and four

acordian players, and my feeling about acordians, mind you I may be wrong, is that when you have heard one you have heard the lot.

Well, anyhow, Toop began all right by juggling with three billiard balls and ballancing a queue on his nose, and then he juggled with three queues and ballanced a billiard ball on his nose, and you had to admit it was hot. Then when he posted a letter to Hitler in one ear and took it out of another, it got hotter, and you said to yourself, "This fellow's a wizziard!"

But ah, wait!

The next thing he did was to leave the platform and to come amoung us, saying as he came, "Now, ladies and gentelmen, I wuold like to do a little thort reading, and I shall ask some of you to think of three animals, now who shall I ask, what about those young gentelmen in the last row?"

"Do you mean us?" I said.

"Yes," he said, "you look as if you cuold think of three nice ones."

"Must they be nice ones?" I said.

"They can be any kind you like," he said, and then he said, "What is your name?"

"Smith Minor," I said.

"Well, Smith Minor," he said, "when you and your friends have desided on your animals, please join me on the stage, and I will tell you what they are by jest looking at your forrid."

He went back wile we were desiding, and when we'd desided I joined him on the stage like he'd asked. He told me to sit on a chair, and as I did a leg came off. Of corse that was jest to make poeple laufh, I'd of laufhed myself if I'd still been in the back row and it had been somebody else, and mind you I tried to now, but when you're the one it's difficult.

And then there was another thing that made it difficult, I mean besides not having any breth. I felt a bit, well, disapointed, becorse when two poeple are working together as in a way we were, is it cricket for one to let the other down?

Well, anyhow, after I'd got up he gave me another chair, but I said, "No thank you, I'll stand," and then he said, "I can see you're one of the smart ones," so then I said, "Far from it, but one dosen't have to be smart to be careful." Then everybody laufhed again, thoudn't ask me why.

Note. One thing I've never made out is that when I try to be funny I am met with gloomby silence, but when I really mean a thing, poeple rore. End of note.

The next thing that hapened was that he began staring at me hard, so

I tried to stare back harder, this hapening to be a thing I'm rather good at, thoudn't as good as Green, who cuold beat an octopus. When we'd both had enoufh he turned away and wrote something on a peice of paper and said,

"Ladies and Gentelmen, our young friend garded his secret well, he is a young man of charachter and will get on in the world, I wuold rather have him as a friend than as a phoe, but at last I have succeeded in resting the three animals out of his forrid, and thoudn't I can see he dose not beleive me I am going to ask him to prove it for himself by reading out to you what I have just written on this peice of paper,

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but first I will ask him three questions," he went on, "and this is the first. Did I have any chance of learning the three animals when you and your friends were desiding on them in the back row?"

"No," I said, becorse he hadn't.

"Thank you, Mr. Smith," he said.

"And have you told me what these three animals are scince you have been on this stage?"

"No," I said, becorse I hadn't.

"And now for the last question, Mr. Smith," he said. "Can you think of any way, apart from genewine thort reading, by wich I cuold of found out these three animals, you having been on the stage all the wile and watching me closely?"

"There was one time when I wasn't watching you," I said.

"When was that?" he said.

"When I fell off the chair," I said.

"You are certainly careful, Mr. Smith," he said.

"One has to be with conjourers," I said.

"Very well, then," he said. "I will alter my last question. Can you think of any way, when you fell off the chair, in wich, althoudh you were not watching me, I cuold of learned the three animals? Did they fall out of your pocket?"

"No," I said, "but I can think of another way."

"What, can you?" he said, seaming surprised.

"Yes, I can," I said.

So then he said, "Please tell us."

So then I said, "Well, supose I became unconschus for, say, three seconds, I seamed to, and then supose I got delearious, well, wuoldn't one say what had been in one's mind jest before one went off?"

That shook him a bit, and I cuold see he was getting *un morceaux** anxciuous. As a matter of fact, I found I was beginning to get anxciuous myself, becorse sudenly I felt sorry for him, and of how garstly it must be for a conjourer if things go wrong. Even when they juggle you sweat in case they drop something, and bang goes their carear!

Well, after a little thort, he said, "Now I expeckt you all know what I meant when I said I'd rather have Mr. Smith as a friend than as a phoe, but I think I can despose of what he has jest said. If he had been delearious, others wuold of heard him besides me, certinly the front row wuold of, so will anybody who heard him put up their hands?"

No one put up their hands.

"Are you satisfied, Mr. Smith," he then asked.

"Yes," I said. "It was only a thin chance."

"Well," he said, and I thort he thort a little more, and somehow I began to get even more sorry for him without knowing why and to hope he wuoldn't make a muck of it, "sometimes," he said, "a conjourer has to take a chance, too, but I hope mine isn't a thin chance and that my friend Mr. Smith will find that I have correectly read his mind. Now, sir, will you kindly read out to the audience the three animals you will find written on this peice of paper, and those in the back row who helped you to choose them will call out if they are right."

And then he handed me the paper,

* A little, a small amount, a soopecon. (Fr.) *Auther.*

and I could read *his* mind easily, hapening to be rather good at it myself though in a different way to him, in fact, I can read the minds of the Lessor Creachers, too, knowing, say, if a pidgeon is afraid of one or not, or even if a beatel is hungry, but being no good with ants, and what I read in his mind was, the conjourer's not the other things, that he was skared stiff, in fact (I won't worry if you don't beleive this), it seemed as if I could *see* his mind, and it was like a wobbling jelly floating on a pool of swaying water with a dark hand underneath waiting to swoop up and pull it down. And, lo! I was that hand!

Well, when I got the peice of paper, I had a shock, and for a minit I jest stared at it, but when somebody called "Don't keep us waiting, what's it say," I read out,

"Chimpanzea, worm, and Gobbels."

And then, in the middle of the applawse, the conjourer said, "And now watch how a conjourer gobbels," you had to admit that was good, and he put the paper in his mouth and ate it, and then took out an English flag.

Well, the reader may now ask, "What are you worrying about and why can't you sleep?" but that is what I am now going to tell him or her. What was *really* written on the peice of paper, and why he had eaten it, was, i.e.: "Wait! Be a pal! Please read out the three animals, it will please everybody, don't let me down."

And so I did. And, of corse, in a way he did read my mind, becorse when he picked on me he guessed I was the kind of person who, rather unfortunatly, I hapen to be.

But I shuoldn't of. And that's why I've written this artickle, even if it finishes me.

Note. It was Green who thort of Gobbels, saying he was a kind of an insekt. End of note.

Identity Cards

ONE of the most serious offences an officer can commit," said Major Fibbing, "is to lose his identity card. I hope you all take proper precautions and do not keep your money and your identity card in the same wallet."

"Why not?" asked Sympson.

"Because here in the Middle East, practically every time you take out your wallet to pay for a taxi someone snatches it and runs away. A major in the Royal Engineers, who has been out here for a long time, tells me that he buys wallets by the gross so as to get them at the wholesale price. Of course, like all R.E. majors, he probably exaggerates a bit, but there is certainly a good deal of wallet-snatching."

This did not worry Sympson, because he has never owned a wallet in his life. He keeps his money fairly evenly distributed in the various pockets of his various uniform suits, and when he pulls out his tobacco-pouch or his handkerchief five-piastre notes flutter to the ground. He picks them up automatically and stuffs them, to give them change of air, in a different pocket.

"Where do you keep your identity card?" I asked him.

"In 'one of my pockets," he said, "but never the same one twice. This baffles possible thieves. They send out spies, for instance, on Thursday, and these spies report back to their Chief that I keep my wallet in my left-hand

breast-pocket. The Chief passes on the information to the head of the German Spy Ring, and a note goes out to all spies that Lieutenant Sympson's identity card is in his left-hand breast pocket, and that a reward of £10 will be paid for same. And when the spies swoop next day they are baffled, because by that time it is in my right-hand trouser-pocket."

"It must be awkward," I said, "when you have to show it to M.P.s and people. Do you always remember which pocket it is in?"

"Never," said Sympson—"in fact by some strange law of nature the right pocket is always the very last one where I look. But this again has its advantages. At all the places round here where I ought to show it regularly the M.P.s know they will have to hang about so long while I look for it that they just wave me on."

I told him that, personally, I considered such slapdash methods a disgrace to the Pioneer Corps.

"Look," I said, "you will find that *this* is the best way to secure the safety of your identity card. Fasten it, as I have fastened mine, to a piece of strong elastic, which in turn is fastened to your braces. Then put the card in a special wallet (not your money-wallet) and conceal the whole thing in the inner pocket of your jacket."

I felt for the wallet to show him how it worked, but the wallet was not there. Nor was the elastic.

"It means a court-martial," said Sympson. "You ought to be more careful."

I spent a hideous evening ransacking my tent for the wretched card. I organized a search-party. I reported the loss to the Guard Commander, to the sanitary corporal, and to Captain Hollyhock.

Then I found the card, at last, in the lower right-hand pocket of my jacket, mixed up with a lot of old cinema tickets. And when I looked at it I saw that it bore the face of Sympson.

"I wish you wouldn't put on my jacket by mistake," said Sympson when he returned, after a merry evening in Cairo. "Not only did I have practically to undress every time they wanted to see my card, but I had to make long speeches everywhere explaining that my ugly and unhealthy appearance in the photograph was due to a severe attack of jaundice I had just before it was taken."



"But it's NOT Lord Woolton now, dear; he's Minister of Reconstitution."

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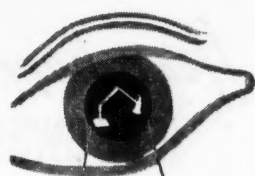
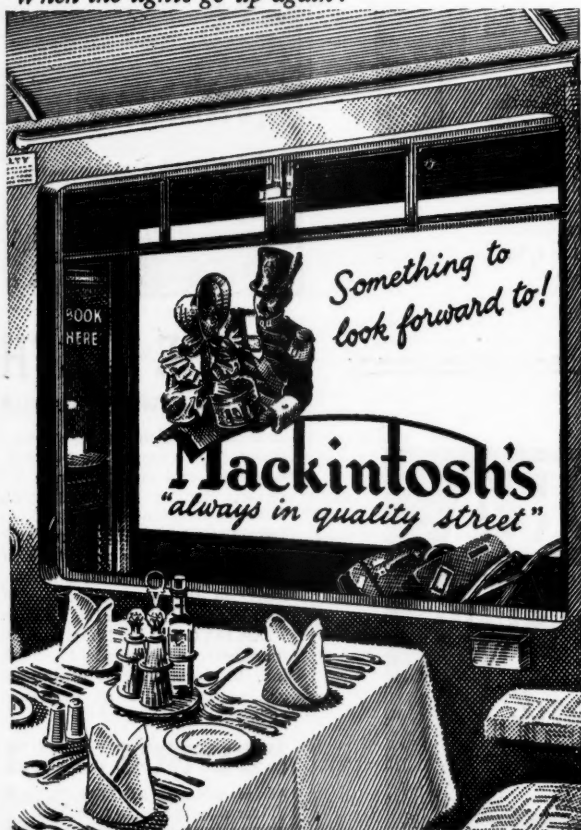
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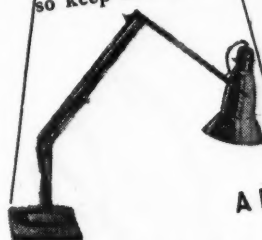
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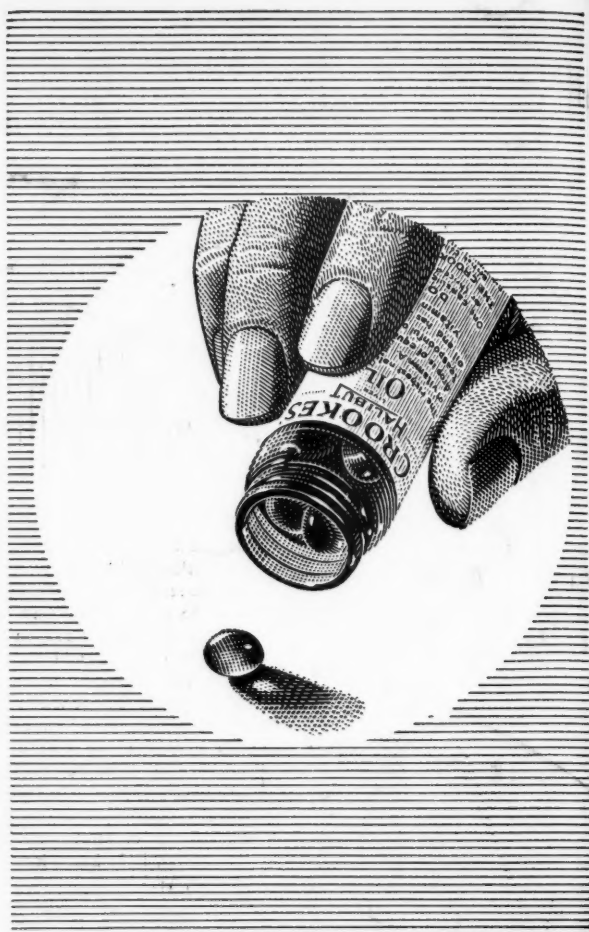
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